

## Chapter 5

### SCOPE OF THE EIS

NRCS conducted a scoping process to identify the concerns of the public, state and local governments, and federal, state, and local agencies and to meet NEPA requirements for public participation. The Cape Cod Conservation District (CCCD) and the Barnstable County Commission's Coastal Resources Committee hosted an initial meeting in Barnstable on October 11, 2001, to introduce the public to the NRCS Small Watershed Program and to explore local problems and NRCS opportunities for addressing those problems. Local citizens and town and state representatives attended the meeting and provided their comments on water resources problems. NRCS then hosted a public meeting in South Yarmouth on May 18, 2005, to seek public input on the watershed plan then in early stages of development. After NRCS gave an introduction to the proposed plan to address stormwater discharges, tidal restrictions on salt marshes, and fish passage obstructions, local citizens and town officials provided comments. Massachusetts NRCS published the notice of its intent to prepare this Plan-EIS in the Federal Register on June 24, 2005, but it received no comments in response to the notice. Throughout this period, the CCCD and NRCS partnership also met individually with congressional staff; town and county governments; the Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head (Aquinnah); the Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe; federal, state, and local agencies; and state and local interest groups, as described further in Section 7.

The concerns identified by the public are listed in Table 5-1 along with concerns that NRCS is required to address through the NEPA process. The degree of concern is a relative ranking of the importance attached to the concern by the public, primarily measured by the relative number of comments or depth of discussion. The degree of significance is a relative ranking by the agencies involved in the scoping process of the issues that are important for defining the problems or formulating and evaluating alternative solutions. In rating the degree of significance, NRCS and the agencies considered that the current plan covers a broad range of projects and environments and project-specific concerns will be addressed further in NEPA documents tiered to this EIS. NRCS, for example, will evaluate site-specific impacts to threatened and endangered species and cultural resources for each project as it is considered for individual funding. Concerns that are rated high or moderate in significance are discussed in further detail in this Plan-EIS.

**Table 5-1  
Identified concerns**

| Economic, social, environmental, and cultural concerns | Degree of concern <sup>1/</sup> | Degree of significance to the decisionmaking <sup>2/</sup> | Remarks   | Section of Plan-EIS where concern is discussed |
|--|---------------------------------|--|---|--|
| Shellfish beds   | High                            | High   | Primary concern of residents, sponsors and Massachusetts DMF (water quality, closure to shellfishing) | 6.3.5<br>6.3.9<br>6.3.10                       |
| Anadromous fisheries                                   | High                            | High   | Primary concern of residents, sponsors and Massachusetts DMF (restricted passages)                    | 6.3.5<br>6.3.9<br>6.3.10                       |
| Salt marshes   | High                            | High   | Primary concern of residents, sponsors and Massachusetts DMF (restricted tidal flushing)              | 6.3.6  |
| Water quality  | High                            | High   | Primary concern of residents and sponsors   | 6.3.4  |
| Groundwater quality                                    | High                            | Moderate   | May be affected by stormwater projects  | 6.3.3  |
| Threatened and endangered species                      | Moderate                        | Moderate   | Analysis of effects required by Endangered Species Act  | 6.3.7  |
| Human health and safety                                | Moderate                        | Moderate   | Evaluated for all NRCS projects   | 6.3.13   |
| Beaches  | Moderate                        | Moderate   | Affected by stormwater projects   | 6.3.10   |
| Wildlife habitat                                       | Moderate                        | Moderate   | May be affected by salt marsh projects  | 6.3.6  |
| Nontidal wetlands                                      | Low                             | Moderate   | Analysis of effects required by Clean Water Act and Executive Order 11990                             | 6.3.6  |
| Cultural resources                                     | Low                             | Moderate   | Analysis of effects required by National Historic Preservation Act                                    | 6.3.12   |

| Economic, social, environmental, and cultural concerns | Degree of concern <sup>1/</sup> | Degree of significance to the decisionmaking <sup>2/</sup> | Remarks   | Section of Plan-EIS where concern is discussed |
|--|---------------------------------|--|---|--|
| Invasive species                                       | Low                             | Moderate   | <i>Phragmites</i> replaced through salt marsh improvements                                      | 6.3.6  |
| Prime and important farmland                           | High                            | Low  | Evaluated for all NRCS projects; not affected by this Project                                   |  |
| Highly erodible cropland                               | High                            | Low  | Evaluated for all NRCS projects; not affected by this Project                                   |  |
| Local funding for water quality improvements           | High                            | Low  | Citizen concern over lack of local funding. Decision making by state and local political bodies |  |
| Public open space                                      | Moderate                        | Low  |   |  |
| Tax rates  | Low                             | Low  | Decision making by Congress and state and local political bodies                                |  |
| Streamflow   | Low                             | Low  | Water withdrawals regulated by the state  |  |
| Population growth                                      | Low                             | Low  |   |  |
| Navigation in tidal channels (dredging)                | Low                             | Low  |   |  |
| Coastal flood zones                                    | Low                             | Low  |   |  |
| Old water and sewer systems (100+ years)               | Low                             | Low  |   |  |

<sup>1/</sup> Concerns raised in scoping process or required by Agency or federal policy, rated on relative occurrence of statements of concern

<sup>2/</sup> Relative significance of given concern for defining the problems and formulating and evaluating alternative solutions.

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